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LETTER DATED 22 AUGUST 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 22 August 1996, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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Annex

Letter dated 22 August 1996 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1031, I attach the ninth report on IFOR operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the UN Security Council.

We are fast approaching the most sensitive part of the implementation of the Peace Accord, the elections in mid-September. It was for this reason that I visited Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the SACEUR, a few days ago. We wanted to inform ourselves at first hand in this critical period leading up to the elections. This is now the time for Bosnia and Herzegovina to consolidate the peace that IFOR has brought. Elections must take place on time and it is now up to the Parties to do their part to ensure that they are free and fair.

Notwithstanding the reaffirmation that we received from all the Parties during our visit of their commitment to comply with the Peace Accord and to help ensure a free and fair election environment, we still have concerns as to the continued incidents of harassment and intimidation and the obstruction to freedom of movement and freedom to return to homes of origin. Moreover, we still see continued tension within the Federation, although the agreement to abolish Herzog-Bosna is welcome news. Lastly, there have been some worrying indications of an intention to restrict IFOR inspection access and thus violate compliance requirements. There is no doubt, however, that IFOR's reaction in standing firm has helped overcome this problem, notably in the incident at Han Pijesak mentioned in paragraph 6 of the report.

In this last report before the elections, let me assure you that IFOR will continue to provide general security and substantial logistic support, especially to the OSCE and the IPTF. But the attitude of the Parties will remain crucial to preventing civil disturbances and voter harassment.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Ninth Report to the UN Security Council on IFOR Operations

IFOR Operations

1. The multinational implementation force (IFOR) comprises approximately 53,000 personnel deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, from all the NATO nations and from 16 non-NATO contributors. Currently IFOR is being restructured with forces that are more appropriate for the tasks required of it during the remainder of its mission. Mobile units, better suited to the increasing task of patrolling, are replacing some of the original, heavier armoured units. Overall, the current force levels will be maintained until after the elections in September and IFOR's overall capability will be retained until December, when its mandate comes to an end. Preparations are underway to streamline the IFOR command structure in preparation for the completion of its mission at the end of the year.

2. IFOR air assets continue to provide the capability required to secure the air space, defend and support IFOR ground forces, provide support to civilian agencies within mission capabilities, and to monitor compliance. Since the last report, a Memorandum of Agreement with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) on the establishment of a 'restricted operating zone' to allow for IFOR close air support training flights, has been signed. As a result, IFOR has initiated regular, coordinated close air support training missions over Eastern Slavonia, to exercise plans to provide close air support, if required, to the UN Transitional Authority in East Slavonia (UNTAES). IFOR maritime assets also remain deployed in support of IFOR.

3. Throughout the reporting period, IFOR has continued to carry out its primary task of implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement, including the inspection and verification of barracks/cantonments and air defence weapons storage sites. IFOR has also continued to carry out such secondary tasks as supporting the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF) in their operations to ensure civilian Freedom of Movement. Ground and aerial patrols of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) and the Zone of Separation (ZOS) have been maintained, as has the monitoring of de-mining operations. Plans to support an emergency withdrawal of the UNTAES force remain in place.

4. Mines still pose the greatest risk to IFOR and others. In addition, occasional threats have been directed against IFOR and the IPTF, and recently some incidents have occurred, but IFOR maintains and has used its robust capabilities and Rules of Engagement to enable it to defend itself and the IPTF effectively and to provide protection for others involved in implementing the Peace Agreement. A recent adaptation to the IFOR Operations Plan has further enhanced the basis for close cooperation and security coverage between IFOR and the IPTF.

5. Progress continues to be made in opening up the country by the improvement of the country's infrastructure, such as the repair of roads, bridges and railroads, together with efforts to open airports to commercial

traffic. After being closed for four years, Sarajevo International Airport has reopened to civilian air traffic from 15th August. Supported by an appropriate information campaign, patrolling continues throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to enhance freedom of movement and to remove obstacles, where these are found. However, while the number of illegal checkpoints is low, civilian freedom of movement is limited and the Parties themselves have still to create a climate of public confidence in which people can move freely and return to their homes of origin.

Cooperation and Compliance by the Parties

6. Progress continues with demobilization and most of the forces and heavy weapons of the former warring factions have been placed in cantonments. While the overall trend remains positive, there were a series of incidents during the reporting period which raised concern about full compliance with the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. IFOR continues to discover undeclared weapons and ordnance and these are being disposed of, as necessary, in line with COMIFOR's stated policy. IFOR was also denied access to a VRS facility at Han Pijesak. This was resolved through intervention with Republika Srpska political authorities, but not before the publicised IFOR preparations under Operation FEAR NAUGHT had been implemented. IFOR will continue to carry out inspections of the military facilities of all Parties at times, and under conditions, of its own choosing, in accordance with the provisions of the Peace Agreement. IFOR's role in ensuring that all Parties adhere to the military obligations contained in the Peace Agreement remains a priority task.

7. While the creation of UNHCR bus routes over the IEBL has met with some success, an area of great concern remains that of civilian FOM and, especially, freedom of return of displaced persons and refugees. All Parties continue to place obstacles to these freedoms by the construction of unauthorized checkpoints and the use of intimidation to expel minorities.

8. Organised Foreign Forces have been withdrawn from Bosnia and Herzegovina, although a limited number of individuals still remain. Separately, it appears that all prisoners of war, for whom the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) have determined that there is insufficient evidence to warrant further detention, have been released, but there does remain substantial evidence indicating that the Parties continue to detain prisoners who have not been registered by the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC).

Cooperation with the High Representative, the OSCE, and other International Organisations

9. Within its capabilities and subject to the fulfilment of its primary military mission, IFOR continues to develop its support to the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement, including the maintenance of a secure environment in which civil organizations can operate. IFOR is currently providing priority support to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in preparing the elections on 14th September, particularly in such areas as planning, logistics and communications. IFOR will also work closely with the OSCE, IPTF and the Parties to provide a secure environment for the

elections, including through the concentration of forces at potential points of confrontation. IFOR is also working with the OHR and OSCE to determine how it can best contribute to the establishment of common institutions following the elections.

10. IFOR continues to work closely with the UNHCR in its efforts to promote the repatriation of refugees and return of displaced persons. For returns to majority areas, IFOR is cooperating with the UNHCR, who is focusing on its 23 target areas. For returns to minority areas, IFOR is supporting UNHCR and the UN IPTF in facilitating movement of groups across the IEBL, and supporting as required the UNHCR inter-entity bus service.

11. IFOR continues to share information with OSCE Personal Representative General Vigleik Eide in support of his work on the implementation of the Agreement on sub-regional arms control. In particular, IFOR is sharing all reliable data it obtains on weapons holdings inside Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to encourage the effective implementation of this agreement.

12. IFOR continues to support the ICTY, in particular by carrying out extensive aerial and ground surveillance of alleged mass grave sites to which ICTY has given priority status. IFOR also continues to provide security and logistical support to ICTY teams investigating alleged mass grave sites in the Srebrenica area.